



## MSW Program at West Chester University

# Outstanding Achievements

As we change our calendars to May, the MSW Program is welcoming another class of graduates as professional social workers. We also recognize their Field Instructors and the time and energy they spend mentoring the next generation of practitioners.

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### In this email

- [MSW faculty choose two Outstanding Graduates](#)
  - [Field Instructors recognized for exceptional supervision](#)
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## MSW faculty choose two Outstanding Graduates

*Women excelled at balancing  
school and life*

Students in the MSW Program juggle multiple responsibilities -- jobs, caregiving, classes, and field placements. Emily Delaplane and Kelly Smack, honored as this year's Outstanding Graduates demonstrated excellence inside and outside of the classroom.



*Outstanding Graduates Kelly Smack  
(left) and Emily Delaplane (right).*

Delaplane attended classes full-time, commuting to West Chester from the

[Ronald McDonald House of Delaware](#), where she lives and works as the resident manager. She also has a part-time position as a recovery specialist at the [Rockford Center](#) psychiatric facility, where she was hired after her first-year field placement. Delaplane completed her second field placement at [Nemours / Alfred I duPont Hospital for Children](#).

She plans to be a medical social worker after graduating this spring. Her experience at the Ronald McDonald House, where families stay while their children are being treated at local hospitals, illustrates how all segments of society interact with the health care system.

"We have one family from India and one family from Illinois, and their kids have the exact same rare diagnosis," she says. "I love to show people how much stronger they can be after going through this."

Kelly Smack worked in behavioral health and case management for more than a decade before she started her master's degree at WCU's Philadelphia campus. Her goal was to achieve the education needed advocate more effectively for her clients.

The mother of two young daughters attended classes part-time. Her field placements were at the [United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey](#) and the [Joseph J. Peters Institute](#).

Smack's mother and sister died within five months of each other while she was in graduate school, and she took some time away from classes to attend to her family. The MSW Program faculty encouraged her to take the time she needed.

"I'm just so grateful," Smack says. "I was able to be a human and make real-life decisions."

She plans to use her MSW to work in schools in Philadelphia. Her family moved to the city when she was a child to take advantage of excellent schools, she says, and she wants today's children to have the same opportunities.

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**Field Instructors  
recognized for  
exceptional supervision**



## *Supervisors' mentoring went above and beyond*

Faculty Field Liaisons in the BSW and MSW programs recognized 22 Field Instructors who put forth especially notable efforts in supervising their students during the 2015-16 academic year. Each Outstanding Field Instructor received a \$100 award.

*Field Instructor Mary Therese Lopata  
(left) of Mercy Vocational High School*

*and Adjunct Professor*

*Aisha Coulson-Walters (right).*

These Field Instructors distinguished themselves through their extra commitment to encouraging students'

professional development. They have mentored their students as they have navigated the challenges of life inside and outside of graduate school and developed collaborative relationships with faculty and staff from the MSW Program.

All of the Outstanding Field Instructors are [listed here](#).

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